

Listing of Claims

1. (cancelled).

2. (cancelled).

3. (cancelled).

4. (cancelled).

5. (cancelled).

6. (cancelled).

7. (currently amended) A method of monitoring a first patient and a second patient, comprising the steps of:

placing a first pressure pad under the first patient which first pressure pad activates a first switch when energized;

attaching a fastener to the first patient, wherein if the first patient moves beyond a predetermined distance, a second switch moves between one of an open state or a closed state to the other of the open or closed state; and

providing a control unit in communication with the first and second switches to provide an alarm signal when either the first switch or the second switch is activated wherein the first pressure pad is activated by removal of pressure and reset by application of pressure;

~~disposing of the first pressure pad when the first patient no longer has use of the first pressure pad without permitting use of the first pressure pad by another patient; and~~

~~replacing the first pressure pad with a second pressure pad and attaching the fastener to the second patient.~~

8. (currently amended) A method in accordance with claim 7 wherein the fastener is attached to clothing of the ~~first and second patients~~ patient.

9. (currently amended) A method in accordance with claim 7 further including the step of providing a verbal message ~~of one of the first and second patients~~ to the patient when the first switch or second switch is activated.

10. (original) A method in accordance with claim 7 further including the step of transmitting a signal to a remote station and providing an alarm to a caretaker at the remote station.

11. (currently amended) Apparatus for monitoring a patient, comprising:
a pressure pad for providing a signal indicating a pressure condition;
a control unit connected to the pressure pad and responsive to the signal; and
a casing at least partly encasing the control unit and at least partly encasing the pressure pad.

12. (original) Apparatus for monitoring a patient in accordance with claim 11 in which the pressure pad is activated by removal of pressure and inactivated by application of pressure.

13. (original) Apparatus in accordance with claim 11 further including a recorded voice message sounding within hearing distance of the patient.

14. (original) Apparatus in accordance with claim 11 wherein the pressure pad responds to pressure by reducing electrical resistance between a first point and a second point, said apparatus including a switch armed upon the reduction of electrical resistance and an alarm for providing the alarm when the switch has been armed and the electrical resistance is under a predetermined resistance threshold for more than 1 second, wherein a movement of the patient from the pressure pad triggers the alarm.

15. (original) A patient monitoring system according to claim 14 in which the alarm provides the alarm when the switch has been armed and electrical resistance is under the predetermined resistance threshold for a time between 2 seconds and 3 seconds in duration.

16. (cancelled).

17. (previously presented) A pressure pad comprising:
a gel cushion;
an alarm system having a pressure switch and an alarm;
said pressure switch being in communication with said gel cushion, whereby pressure on the gel cushion results in pressure on the pressure switch;
said alarm being connected to said pressure switch to be controlled thereby;
the alarm system being armed upon pressure being placed on the pressure pad and activated upon a release of the pressure; and

means for preventing at least one of the arming the alarm system and the activating of said alarm when the placing of pressure more than a predetermined pressure and the release of said pressure are separated in time by less than a preset period of time.

18. (original) A pressure pad according to claim 17 in which the alarm is a visible alarm.

19. (original) A pressure pad according to claim 17 in which the alarm is an audible alarm.

20. (previously presented) A pressure pad according to claim 17 in which the pressure switch includes two conductors spaced by a flexible material that permits contact between the conductors under a predetermined amount of pressure.

21. (previously presented) A method of monitoring a patient, comprising the steps of:

placing a first pressure pad that is encased in a cover on a resting place for a first patient;

energizing the first pressure pad, whereby a signal is provided responsive to the pressure above a predetermined pressure being placed on the first pressure pad by the first patient;

applying pressure above said predetermined pressure to the first pressure pad;

removing said pressure above said predetermined pressure;

arming the first pressure pad when said pressure above said predetermined pressure is on the first pressure pad whereby the first pressure pad serves as a sensor;

activating an alarm when the pressure above said predetermined pressure has been on the first pressure pad for a predetermined time and is removed from the armed first pressure pad;

disposing of the first pressure pad when the first patient no longer has use of the first pressure pad without permitting use by another patient and replacing the first pressure pad with a second pressure pad for a second patient;

wherein the first pressure pad is a first sensor and a second sensor is placed in juxtaposition with the first patient so that when the first patient assumes a dangerous position as indicated by the second sensor an alarm signal is given, a monitoring station is activated when the alarm signal is provided, and a voice message is announced near the first patient;

wherein the step of placing the second sensor in juxtaposition with the first sensor includes the substep of placing a mechanical switch in a position to be activated when the first patient attempts to leave a location.

22. (previously presented) A method of monitoring a patient, comprising the steps of:

placing a pressure pad that is encased in a cover on a resting place for the patient;

energizing the pressure pad, whereby a signal is provided responsive to pressure above a predetermined pressure being placed on the pressure pad by the patient;

applying pressure above said predetermined pressure to the pressure pad;

removing said pressure above said predetermined pressure;

arming the pressure pad when said pressure above said predetermined pressure is on the pressure pad whereby the pressure pad serves as a sensor;

activating an alarm when the pressure above said predetermined pressure has been on the pressure pad for a predetermined time and is removed from the armed pressure pad;

disposing of the pressure pad when the patient no longer has use of the pressure pad without permitting use by another patient;

wherein the pressure pad is a first sensor and a second sensor is placed in juxtaposition with the patient so that when the patient assumes a dangerous position as indicated by the second sensor an alarm signal is given, a monitoring station is activated when the alarm signal is provided, and a voice message is announced near the patient;

wherein the step of placing a second sensor in juxtaposition with the first sensor included the substep of placing a photoelectric sensor in a position to be activated when the patient attempts to leave a location.

23. (previously presented) A method of monitoring a patient, comprising the steps of:

placing a first pressure pad that is encased in a cover on a resting place for a first patient;

energizing the first pressure pad, whereby a signal is provided responsive to pressure above a predetermined pressure being placed on the first pressure pad by the first patient;

applying pressure above said predetermine pressure to the first pressure pad;

removing said pressure above said predetermined pressure;

arming the first pressure pad when said pressure above said predetermined pressure is on the first pressure pad whereby the first pressure pad serves as a sensor;

activating an alarm when the pressure above said predetermined pressure has been on the first pressure pad for a predetermined time and is removed from the armed first pressure pad;

disposing of the first pressure pad when the first patient no longer has use of the first pressure pad without permitting use by another patient and replacing the first pressure pad with a second pressure pad for a second patient;

wherein the first pressure pad is a first sensor and a second sensor is placed in juxtaposition with the first patient so that when the first patient assumes a dangerous position as indicated by the second sensor an alarm signal is given, a monitoring station is activated when the alarm signal is provided, and a voice message is announced near the first patient wherein the step of placing said second sensor in juxtaposition with the first sensor includes the substep of detecting the direction of motion of the first patient.

24. (previously presented) A method of monitoring a patient, comprising the steps of:

placing a pressure pad that is encased in a cover on a resting place for the patient;
energizing the pressure pad, whereby a signal is provided responsive to pressure above a predetermined pressure being placed on the pressure pad by the patient;

applying pressure above said predetermined pressure to the pressure pad;
arming the pressure pad when said pressure above said predetermined pressure is on the pressure pad whereby the pressure pad serves as a sensor;

activating an alarm when the pressure above said predetermined pressure has been on the pressure pad for a predetermined time and is removed from the armed pressure pad after said predetermined time wherein an alarm is provided to a caretaker; and

disposing of the pressure pad when the patient no longer has use of the pressure pad without permitting use by another patient;

the step of activating the alarm when the pressure above the predetermined pressure is removed from the armed pressure pad after said predetermined time comprising the substeps of generating a signal upon arming of said pressure pad, transmitting said signal through a first path to a microprocessor wherein a flag is set in said microprocessor; transmitting said signal in a second path, delaying said signal in said second path in a delay line external to said microprocessor; applying said delayed signal from said second path to said microprocessor wherein said flag is removed; transmitting said alarm if said pressure above the predetermined pressure is removed from said pressure pad while said flag is present.

25. (previously presented) A method of monitoring a patient, comprising the steps of:

placing a pressure pad that is encased in a cover on a resting place for the patient;
energizing the pressure pad, whereby a signal is provided responsive to pressure above a predetermined pressure being placed on the pressure pad by the patient;

applying pressure above said predetermined pressure to the pressure pad;
arming the pressure pad when said pressure above said predetermine pressure is on the pressure pad whereby the pressure pad serves as a sensor;

activating an alarm when the pressure above said predetermined pressure has been on the pressure pad for a predetermined time and is removed from the armed pressure pad after said predetermined time wherein an alarm is provided to a caretaker; and

disposing of the pressure pad when the patient no longer has use of the pressure pad without permitting use by another patient;

the step of activating the alarm when the pressure above the predetermined pressure is removed from the armed pressure pad after said predetermined time comprising the substeps of causing a program in a microprocessor to set a flag upon arming of said pressure pad, causing said program to determine when said predetermined time has elapsed from the setting of said flag and transmitting said alarm if said pressure above said predetermined pressure is removed after said predetermined time.

26. (previously presented) An apparatus in accordance with claim 11 further including a second sensor wherein said second sensor is a mechanical switch located in a position to be activated when the patient attempts to leave a location.

27. (previously presented) Apparatus for monitoring a patient comprising:
a pressure pad for providing a signal indicating a pressure condition;
a control housing connected to and located adjacent to the pressure pad and responsive to the signal;
a casing at least partly encasing the control housing and the pressure pad; and
a second sensor wherein the second sensor is a photoelectric sensor located in a position to be activated when the patient attempts to leave a location.

28. (currently amended) Apparatus for monitoring a patient, comprising:
a pressure pad for providing a signal indicating a pressure condition;
a control housing connected to and located adjacent to the pressure pad and responsive to the signal;
a casing at least partly encasing the control housing and at least partly encasing the pressure pad; and
a second sensor wherein means in the control housing responsive to said signal includes means responsive to a first sensor and the second sensor for detecting the direction of motion of the patient.

29. (previously presented) Apparatus for monitoring a patient, comprising:
a pressure pad for providing a signal indicating a pressure condition;
a control housing connected to and located adjacent to the pressure pad and responsive to the signal;
a casing at least partly encasing the control housing and the pressure pad;
an alarm means at least partly within the casing; and
control means within the control housing for activating an alarm when a pressure above a predetermined pressure is removed from an armed pressure pad;

said control means comprising means for generating a signal upon arming of said pressure pad, a microprocessor, means for transmitting said signal through a first path to said microprocessor wherein a flag is set in said microprocessor; means for transmitting said signal in a second path, means for delaying said signal in said second path in a delay line external to said microprocessor; and means for applying said delayed signal from said second path to said microprocessor wherein said flag is removed; transmitting an alarm if said pressure above the predetermined pressure is removed from said pressure pad while said flag is present.

30. (cancelled)

31. (previously presented) A pressure pad comprising:

a gel cushion;

an alarm system having a pressure switch and an alarm;

said pressure switch being in communication with said gel cushion, whereby pressure on the gel cushion results in pressure on the pressure switch;

said alarm being connected to said pressure switch to be controlled thereby;

the alarm system being armed upon pressure being placed on the pressure pad and activated upon a release of the pressure only if said pressure is removed at least a predetermined time after the alarm system is armed; and

at least one tubular member communicating with gel within the gel cushion and with said pressure switch wherein force on the gel cushion results in force transmitted through the tubular member to the pressure switch.

32. (previously presented) Apparatus for monitoring a patient in accordance with claim 11 in which the control unit includes alarm means activated by said signal indicating a pressure condition.

33. (previously presented) Apparatus for monitoring a patient in accordance with claim 32 in which the control unit further includes a battery within said casing.

34. (previously presented) Apparatus for monitoring a patient in accordance with claim 33 in which at least one of the pressure pad and battery are adjacent to the alarm means.

35. (previously presented) Apparatus for monitoring a patient in accordance with claim 34 in which the casing is a waterproof, flexible casing.

36. (currently amended) Apparatus for monitoring a patient, comprising:

a pressure sensor for providing a signal indicating a pressure condition;
alarm means connected to the pressure sensor and responsive to the signal; and
a casing ~~at least partly encasing a~~ defining an interior, at least a portion of a control unit and at least a portion of a pressure pad being positioned in the interior of the casing.

37. (previously presented) Apparatus for monitoring a patient in accordance with claim 36 in which the control unit further includes a battery within said casing.

38. (previously presented) Apparatus for monitoring a patient in accordance with claim 37 in which at least one of the pressure pad and battery are adjacent to the alarm means.

39. (previously presented) Apparatus for monitoring a patient in accordance with claim 38 in which the casing is waterproof, flexible casing.

40. (previously presented) Apparatus for monitoring a patient, comprising:
a pressure sensor for providing a signal indicating a pressure condition;
a control unit connected to the pressure sensor and responsive to the signal; and
a casing sealed around the control unit and the pressure sensor.

41. (previously presented) Apparatus for monitoring a patient in accordance with claim 40 in which the control unit includes alarm means activated by said signal indicating a pressure condition.

42. (previously presented) Apparatus for monitoring a patient in accordance with claim 41 in which the control unit further includes a battery within said casing.

43. (previously presented) Apparatus for monitoring a patient in accordance with claim 42 in which at least one of the pressure sensor and battery are adjacent to the alarm means.

44. (previously presented) Apparatus for monitoring a patient in accordance with claim 43 in which the casing is waterproof, flexible casing.